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the accurate determinations of star-positions from photographic plates. Columbia University Observatory has had a very extensive experience in this field, and is the only institution in this country with equipment and organization suitable for doing this work on a large scale.

Since the middle of December, the nights suitable for making *Eros* observations have been unusually few, even for winter months.

W. W. CAMPBELL.

1901, January 30.

A GIFT TO THE LICK OBSERVATORY.

The Committee of the National Academy of Sciences in charge of the Henry Draper Fund (for promoting research in astronomical physics) have made a grant of five hundred dollars to the Lick Observatory, to provide lenses, prisms, slit, materials, etc., for the construction of a thoroughly modern one-prism spectrograph.

The spectrographic work on faint spectra at this Observatory was done for several years with the original visual spectroscope, provided with photographic lenses. This was unsatisfactory, on account of the very large flexure effects during long exposures. Later, our one-prism spectrography has been done with a wooden-mounted instrument. The need of a first-class one-prism instrument has long been felt; and the generous gift from the Draper Fund will provide for its construction in the near future.

1901, January 30. W. W. CAMPBELL.

COMET NOTES.

Only three comets were discovered in the year 1900, all unexpected.

Comet *a* was discovered by M. GIACOBINI at Nice, on January 31, 1900. It was approaching the Sun rapidly when discovered, and in a few weeks was lost to observation, only reappearing on the other side of the Sun toward the end of May. The last observation made at this observatory was on July 22d. The comet's path was sensibly parabolic.

Comet *b* was discovered on July 23d by M. BORRELLY, at Marseilles, and independently by Dr. BROOKS, at Geneva, N. Y., a few hours later on the same night. It was a conspicuous object in a telescope of moderate aperture for several weeks, and